# LETTERS

OF THE

# REV. WALTER W. BAGSTER

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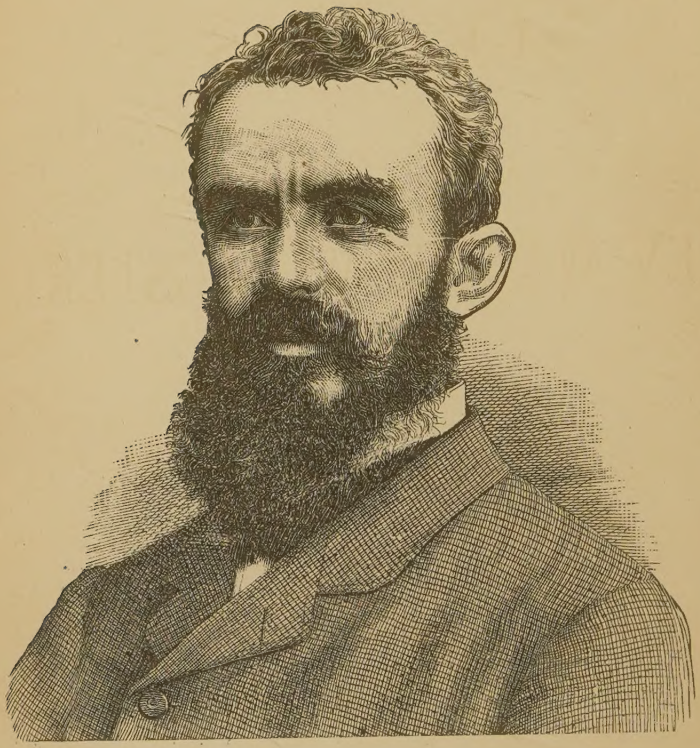

REV. W. W. BAGSTER.

"THE JOY OF MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE."

# LETTERS

OF THE

# REV. WALTER W. BAGSTER,

OF THE

West Central African Mission.

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"I HAVE on my mind a subject on which I want to write at some time. It is THE MISSIONARY'S JOYS, . . . THE JOY OF MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE." Thus wrote the Rev. Walter W. Bagster, one of the pioneer missionaries in the region of Bihé, West Central Africa, in a letter of November, 1881. A few months after, he entered into the joy of his Lord. While he was preparing for his work, and during the brief period when he was engaged in it, his correspondence overflowed with expressions of delight in the Lord, and in the way in which He was leading him. It has been thought that selections from his letters, such as aré brought together in this simple form, may furnish a vivid illustration of the subject which was on his mind.

For the sake of those who may not have been readers of the *Missionary Herald*, some particulars of Mr. Bagster's life are prefixed to the letters. In a pamphlet of eighty-three pages, entitled *The Mission of the American Board to West Central Africa — Pioneer Work*, will be found the history of that mission to the close of the year 1881.

J. O. M.

*A. B. C. F. M., Boston, May, 1883.*

## I. INCIDENTS OF HIS LIFE.

Walter Weldon Bagster was born in London, England, October 20, 1847. He was the son of Benjamin Bagster, and grandson of Samuel Bagster, of the well-known Bible warehouse. His home was in the midland and southern counties of England until he was nineteen years of age, when he spent a year in Canada West. From there he returned to England for a few months, and in the spring of 1873 went to California, where he resided until he left for Africa. He was "brought up as a farmer, studied surveying and deep draining, had charge of an estate for two years, was one year in a land agent's and surveyor's office." He "never pursued any regular course of study;" all that he learned at home was with tutors. "As a boy he had a fair knowledge of Latin, French, and a little German." In California he worked at many things, mostly at surveying and mining. The "*Contra Costa Gazette*, county official paper, Saturday, December 6, 1873," has the following

Card. — At a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Mount Diablo Summit Road Company, held at Pacheco December 1st, the following resolution was unanimously adopted: *Resolved*, That we tender our thanks to W. W. Bagster, Esq., for the faithful and accurate work of the survey of the Mount Diablo Summit Road, and that we recommend Mr. W. W. Bagster to the public as a thorough and accurate surveyor and engineer. J. S. Hall, S. W. Johnson, W. W. Camron, Nathaniel Jones, John Slitz, Directors. The Secretary was instructed to have the above published in the *Contra Costa Gazette*. JOHN SLITZ, Secretary.

Walnut Creek, December 4, 1873.

Mr. Bagster became a Christian early in life. He was baptized and received into the Arundel Square Congregational

Church, London, July 28, 1869. From early youth — the result, as he believed, of his Christian training — he had a desire to serve God as a missionary. He then began to think of Africa. One thing in mind in coming to America was, as he said to a friend shortly before he sailed on his mission, that he might make a fortune and then go to Africa at his own charges. As time went on and the fortune did not come, he was led to consider the fact that there were societies ready to support young men as missionaries. By the advice of a friend already in the missionary service, he dropped secular employments, and spent two years in study at the Pacific Theological Seminary, Oakland, California. During the latter part of his seminary course he took charge of the church at Pacheco, where his services were so much blessed that this church, and also another, urged him to become their minister. He declined, not from any undervaluation of that work, but because he thought men might be found for it more easily than to go abroad, and because he "had given himself to the foreign work." He offered his services to the American Board, which were gladly accepted; was ordained at the First Congregational Church in Oakland, June 9, 1880; August 7, sailed from New York for Liverpool; October 5, sailed from Lisbon for Benguella, where he landed with his associates, Mr. Sanders and Mr. Miller, November 10. The usual African delays detained them on the coast till March 9, 1881. On the 22d of that month they reached the heights of Bailunda, two hundred miles inland, and five thousand feet above the sea-level. Mr. Bagster was obliged to return to the coast several times, so that the coast fever, from which he suffered more than his companions, became so persistent that after the third return to Bailunda, in November, 1881, the rebound to good health which had followed his reaching the highlands previously, failed to come. On Wednesday, February 15, 1882, he took his bed with a severe attack of fever, accompanied by excruciating pain in the head. February 22, at eight o'clock in the morning, after a week of suffering and two days of painless coma, he passed to

his long-promised rest. At eight o'clock the next morning the stricken company of his fellow-workers laid his mortal body in the grave, in sure and certain hope.

## II. LIGHT IN DARKNESS.

March 16, 1871, Mr. Bagster wrote to his father:

The present is indeed dark to our short sight, but the future is all clear to our Father, as yesterday is to us now; and clearer, for there are many things we cannot understand. It is very hard to bear the cloud, but how very bright the sunshine will be after! If not here, the day will come when there will be no night. It is a pity we cannot live or love here as we shall by-and-by. The Lord is the light of my life, and the Lamb shall be the light thereof. We have the light now, but often lack the power of seeing it as we shall then.

PACHECO, CALIFORNIA, 27 October, 1879.

Duties throng, duties press, and time is *so* short. A week is gone almost while I look round once, and all the work that is laid upon me just now is rather alarming when I look at it in bulk, but when I look at it in detail it is not so formidable. By throwing in a brick at a time the cart is filled. And so, by continued effort and casting myself upon the Lord, the work is gradually conquered and the end reached. I have, by the grace of God given me, almost always the power of casting off the weight of the work, by good sleep and health. . . . Sometimes I do think of the day that is coming, with great joy, when all will be swallowed up in eternal bliss; parting be unknown, counting the time all unknown; sin, unseen, unknown, unloved. Oh, father, grieve not for our short sojourn here. Just remember: we are all to meet around the throne, all to join the glorified throng of the redeemed, all washed in the blood of the Lamb. And yet, when I think of it, I just wonder and adore, and pray

that the Lord Jesus will grant me time to work for Him, right here on earth: and He will, I know, if I can be of use to Him, and thereby glorify His name.

With the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.

Your loving boy.

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, 24 November, 1879.

One thing I am learning to do — the thing that is next to me; and thus much is accomplished in my feeble fashion; but were I to look ahead, I could not do half the work that now rolls off and is left behind. . . . How much I long for the day when I shall really be in the work! Even although these days seem to be so full of work that they pass rapidly, yet it seems very long.

30 DECEMBER, 1879.

Almost has the Old Year fled. No more shall we say 1879. Dead — yes, gone; but, praise to our God! behind its records remain abundant loving-kindness, joy, peace, undeserved good, help and health, food, raiment, and every good thing. Amen and Amen. It has been a year of mercies. Golden memories cluster round some blessed times when Jesus was very near — when He drew back the veil, as it were, and stretched out His hand towards me. Oh, that we could praise Him! Sometimes we try, but fail, and oftener don't even try to raise one note. What fearless, valiant soldiers should we Christians be, clad in the whole armor of God, strengthened by His might, led by the victorious Captain of Salvation; before us the precedent of ten thousand victories, behind the Ebenezers; on the right hand the promise, "Lo, I am with you alway," and on the left, "Underneath are the everlasting arms."

This week has been to me quite a trying one. The Clayton and Pacheco churches have given me a call to become their pastor for a year, and the call has come in such a way, so strong, so unanimous, so truly kind, the position of the churches is so very peculiar, that it is very hard indeed to say no.

## III. PLANNING FOR AFRICA.

Mr. Bagster entered upon theological study with the hope of becoming a foreign missionary. From the first he was also looking towards Africa. As early as September, 1878, before any one else, as far as is known, had suggested the matter to him, he wrote:

Please give my love to mother, and tell her how much I long to see her, but that for the present I have to wait. When I get through, I am on my road to Central Africa. I hope to call *en route* to see her and all.

He added:

SEMINARY, 5 November, 1878.

When you have a good chance, please find out from the Missionary Society on what terms they send out men, and what is requisite in preparation; and when they take into consideration the circumstances of my age and all the out-door habits and qualities that I have, what field they would recommend me to turn my eyes towards. This is some time to look ahead, when I do not even know that I may be able to continue in the Seminary another year. But then it is wise to commence in time to look into the special studies that will hereafter be of use to me; and the fact that I am in some manner used to many kinds of work, although it is almost an essential in the rough frontier life of home missionary work here in the new States, is also quite as important in the real missionary field. My own preference is Africa or India.

The invitation to minister to the church at Pacheco, California, was received towards the close of the year 1879. Already, on the 4th of March of that year, he had written to the Secretaries of the American Board at Boston, to offer himself "as a candidate for appointment to some branch of the foreign work under their care, and more particularly as an *assistant* or *helper* at one of their stations." He added:

My present qualifications and adaptability to the work are

slight so far as theological studies are concerned. I only came to this Seminary last year. I came, having given myself to the work of the Lord in foreign lands, wherever He may guide me. I came here in dependence on Him to help me through my course of study to prepare me for the work, thinking, intending, and hoping to be able to take a regular three years' course. But of late I have had it laid upon me to write and apply for a position in some foreign field as assistant or helper, and more so because I think that time, precious time, is passing. I am now thirty-one years of age, and have seen much of life. I can adapt myself to any of the ordinary classes of work to be found in a rough frontier life. I have a good knowledge of English farming, have been considered a successful overseer of workmen. Six years' experience on this coast and in Canada has taught me to make a good practical use of engineering. I can do rough carpenter work, or go into the woods and build a house. I can plough, drive team, do some little blacksmithing, mine underground, shear sheep, keep store, cook my food, or wash my shirt. When a thing wants doing, I do it; possibly not with much polish, but after a style of my own.

I long to be at work for the Master, and have an idea that there may be a corner even now open where you (and He) need such a man as myself, imperfect as I am in the qualifications that are so advantageous for a missionary.

Praying that Jesus our King may lead and direct in this matter to His own honor and glory,

Yours, etc., W. W. BAGSTER.

The *Manual for Missionary Candidates* contains questions upon various points, to which answers are expected. Some of the replies of Mr. Bagster, written January 12, 1880, throw light upon his character.

As far as I know, I have no doubts respecting any of the doctrines commonly held by the churches of the Board. My views of church organization and government are Congregational. I love that way above all ways, but I can meet any Christian who

teaches and preaches in its grand fullness the sixteenth verse of the third chapter of John's gospel. . . .

For these reasons I desire the foreign work: 1st, Jesus said, "Go ye into *all* the world and preach the gospel to *every* creature;" 2d, I believe that I have some qualification for the work, more than for home work; 3d, I look for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and desire to hasten that day by proclaiming to the heathen the good news of the gospel; and, 4th, I believe that in watering others we ourselves are watered. . . .

In reply to the question how he considered hardships, he wrote:

I have met hardship and suffering for temporal good unflinchingly, and shall I think of such in my Saviour's work? I do not consider them, for I don't know. All that I dare to say is, that I believe that as thy day so shall thy strength be. . . .

I have given myself to the Lord Jesus, body, soul and spirit, all I am or have or can do now in time or hereafter in eternity. If sent by Him into the foreign work, I know nothing less than a life service. . . .

When I think of the coming of Jesus my King, I can only say, Lord, if Thy will is now done upon earth, Come. How welcome to me would Thy coming be. If Thou dost not come during my life here, I am willing to live, anxious to live, for Thee and Thy cause; but I trust Thee that when Thou comest Thy brightness will shine into my tomb and quicken me to life and clothe me with Thy likeness. Then I shall be satisfied. Amen.

He added, a few days afterwards:

My desire is to guard the Board and Christ's cause from the mistake of sending such an one as myself, at a heavy expense, to a distant land, if a better man can be sent in my place; and also to prevent my being sent, whether another man is forthcoming or not, if I am not the right man to send.

When I first mentioned Africa, the reason was, because I feel

that, whatever qualifications I have for foreign work, all or nearly all lie in the direction of frontier work, and where mechanical contrivance and if-you-want-anything-done-do-it-yourself style will come into play; and because, my education and ability being so limited, I am not fitted as one ought to be to go into such fields as Japan, Turkey, etc.; and also because when I was a boy I read all the books that I could find of travels or missions in Africa, and have always had some interest there on this account. For these reasons I mentioned Africa, and if I am given an appointment to that field I shall cheerfully and with a whole heart take up the work. Seeing the Lord's hand leading me, I will go. In such case as going to Africa, I decidedly should prefer the Bihé mission.

Please to consider me as awaiting your service as one of the Great Captain's volunteers. If wanted, call upon me. If not, I pray God that I may have grace to work where I am.

. . . . . .

I feel afraid that you are looking for more than you will find in me. Please not to do this. I feel that only in the event of the Board being unable to find, of the thousands of better men than myself, one who is willing to go, can they be justified in sending me. I would like to see a man better physically, mentally, morally, spiritually, than I am, filling the place. But with all my needs and shortcomings, I can only say, "Here am I, send me." If the better man is found, do not let me stand in the way. I can stand back and fill some chink.

"I will trust and not be afraid."

In the Master's service, yours very truly.

17 MARCH, 1880.

. . . The appointment to the Bihé mission rejoices my heart, and gave me occasion once more to say, "Jesus only!" "The world for Christ!" Oh, that such grace may be given me that, living or dying, I may not only be a true, loyal missionary

of the A. B. C. F. M., but also a faithful, consecrated servant of my Saviour King, Jesus.

In service of this same Jesus,

Most truly yours.

He had just before this written to London:

Now there is a breath of a report, a faint echo, it may be, from the far-off battle. I may be commissioned to Africa. But be this my way, or any other, "All for Jesus" is my motto. Oh, that we may all be found in Him, ready, waiting, anxious, working, praying for that glorious appearing. Even so come, Lord Jesus.

The following was his letter to his father, 14 April, 1880:

. . . You speak of the prospect of my going among the heathen as a change from the former idea of home work. This is not quite the case. I gave myself, when I came to the Seminary, for the foreign work, and was very greatly surprised as I was drawn more and more into the home work and preaching. The very loud call that the Clayton and Pacheco churches gave me made me slow and careful and prayerful in considering it, and not until I really saw that the other was the way did I give them the answer, No.

. . . Your dear, loving words of encouragement and hope to me are sweet to my soul. May I indeed be used of God to the saving of many precious souls! I go to Africa to live for many years and do lots of work. Pray for me, that physically, as well as mentally and spiritually, I may be much stronger, so that my frame may be toughened for glorious work, and real use in the work; but, above all, that, come life, come death, I may be found very, very near to the side of Jesus.

## IV. ON THE WAY TO THE MISSION FIELD.

From California Mr. Bagster came to Boston, and spent some weeks in careful preparation for the difficult undertaking of exploring and arranging for missionary work in the region so little known. He proceeded to England, and, though among his kindred and friends, his time was chiefly devoted to the same object. On the second Sunday evening of the voyage to England he resumed his habit of preaching, which he so much enjoyed, by writing a sermon to "My dear little Congregation" which he left behind in America:

Our text this evening is found in the twentieth verse of the sixteenth chapter of Proverbs, and reads thus: "Whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he." Yes, this is my experience; this is a truth, for I have proved it. The one who trusts the Lord is indeed happy; his cup runneth over; to him is joy and hope and rest and peace and confidence. Oh! you are right when you bring before the world in your daily life such a bright and consistently happy face. . . . This is my sermon tonight to my little congregation of one. Little preachers and little people have to take many texts and preach short sermons; so we will take in addition the tenth verse, eighteenth chapter of Proverbs: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it and is safe."

Beloved, this is the cap-sheaf to the last sermon. "The name of the Lord"—what wonder that the one who trusts in this name is happy; what wonder that the shout comes; what wonder that the glory of the Lord fills and refills these poor, weak hearts of ours; what wonder that we can go forward in the strength of this name!

Oh, I would sing of the goodness of the Lord, and praise His name forever and ever. Ours is a wondrous Saviour, Brother, Friend. In Him, indeed, we live; out of Him, death reigns. Praise God from whom all blessings flow. On this Sabbath evening we would say, Unto Him in whom are all things, and by whom are all things, let there be praise and glory forever and ever. Amen.

After repeating that he looks back with longing eyes to his adopted land, he adds:

I turned my eye *forward*, and saw Old England and a loved father and mother longing to see their boy; and I saw a sister and brothers who would like to have a chat face to face; and I saw good friends on whom my eye has not rested for years, and these all said, Come. And then I looked again, and this was the call I had to answer: I saw Africa in darkness and want and woe, crying out of blackness and darkness and pain and death, "Who shall deliver us?" and I must go. Oh, it is little to give my poor remnant of life to the service of the King, when that King *died* that I might live. May Christ, the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of His person, enter more into our lives; may we be able to lay hold on eternal life, and find the yeas and amens ours. Praise the Lord.

To the same congregation he sent a few words just as he was leaving England:

In three days' time I shall be on the sea, on the way for Africa. In the name of the Lord we go up against His enemies. Let us sing unto the Lord a new song — Africa for Christ — the kingdom of Bihé for my King — the world for Jesus. Praise ye the Lord.

The three pioneers sailed from Lisbon in the steamship Benguella, October 5, 1880. October 8 Mr. Bagster wrote:

As to what I have heard of the land to which we go, I have not heard anything but what the love of Jesus and the pity for dying thousands makes it possible to go willingly to take them the light of the gospel. . . . The work is a great work, and though gladly and joyfully we look forward to it, yet at the same time the greatness drives us to Christ more and more, and to the thought that we are not able of ourselves to do anything, and only as we lean on Him *dare* we to go on.

. . . Do you remember the 103d Psalm was the last we read together alone? It was the Psalm that I read with our folks at home when I was just leaving them; it was the last in Lisbon, and the last in our little prayer-meeting in Madeira, and I intend it shall be the first in Africa. Bless the Lord, O my soul!

ON BOARD THE BENGUELLA, 16 October, 1880.

MY BELOVED FATHER:

As the past days are reviewed, there comes to me such a store of brightness and joy, so much to thank God for and take courage, that I wonder at my weak faith.

. . . Unworthy of all the blessings showered upon me by our God, dear loving friends, father, mother, brothers, sisters, and all say so gladly to me, *Go.* How strong ought I to be; how steady and constant my endeavor to walk worthy of the high, blessed calling wherewith I am called; how jealous should I be, and how humble in my life, for the honor of His dear name. Oh, father, I would run a good race; I would bear an unstained shield from the field; I would indeed be found in the righteousness of Christ; and when I read your letters from Southampton and Lisbon, when I remember all your words of love and hope for and confidence in me, I feel strengthened.

. . . "They that wait upon the Lord shall change their strength . . . and not faint"—strength changed from the weakness of man to the strength of God.

There does not seem to be any doubt of the beauty and healthfulness of the country of Bihé; indeed, men who know it say that it is quite perfect—"impossible to be sick there." Benguella does not seem to be a desirable place; rather to be escaped from as soon as possible. Yes, it will seem queer to be in Bihé with all those black people, even although Jesus our King, our Saviour, our Master, is with me and will not leave nor forsake me. Pray that I may be enabled to trust Him in all

things ; to lie in His arms passive ; no rebellion of heart, no fighting, but just keeping all strength for service, not for kicking and struggling against the Captain.

In sight of the continent of Africa, near Ambriz, November 5, 1880:

How can we sing praise unto the Lord of Hosts? Oh, how glad we are, and how grand and beautiful is the praise our poor hearts would render unto the Lord, and yet how they fail. I must sing "Oh, for a closer walk with God," or "Then in a nobler, sweeter song," or "Praise waiteth for thee in Zion," or "Sing ye praises with understanding."

Yes, we understand some one thousandth part of the loving-kindness of the Lord. Hitherto hath the Lord helped us; and were you with me now, how you would enter into our joy when the land to which we are permitted to go as soldiers of Jesus Christ comes into view — when we are drawing near to this great work to which God has called us. Oh, let us not only sing with the lips, but let us shout the King's praises out of a full heart. There is joy, joy, joy in the service of our King. He *is* King, the King of kings. Oh, let us exalt Him, and praise Him, and render unto Him the service due. Oh, this One so pure, so true, so holy, so wondrous in power and love, is our God, our Saviour, our Friend, our Elder Brother. He is our Jesus, who, while we were yet sinners, died for us that we might live. Praise the Lord! In the name of the Lord we will go forward.

Ask those who love our work to keep on praying specially that we may have very much humbleness of heart, so that God may continually bless us, even as in the past. Send us strong reënforcements. Don't fail to say to the churches: Africa must have men, for the gospel must be preached to her people.

## V. ON THE SHORE OF AFRICA.

The pioneer missionaries, after a pleasant voyage of thirty-nine days from Lisbon, landed safely, November 10, 1880, in St. Philip, the port of Benguella.

The first sight of the heathen people, and the first difficulties and delays on the coast, had no effect to shake Mr. Bagster's trust. He wrote:

BENGUELLA, West Africa, 9 December, 1880.

MY BELOVED FATHER:

. . . Every day I long to be at the work, the days are passing so fast and the work goes so slowly. Indeed, when the real, live, dirty, naked savage comes before you, not in book or letter, not in fancy or passing notice, but under your own eye; when you place your hand upon his shoulder and feel the dirt and nakedness; when you turn that man's face towards you and there you read — "no good thing;" when the foulest pictures, thoughts, and words fail to show him as he is, then, and only then, you have to go to Jesus for faith to believe that for such Christ died; then you need to be very humble to look upon this poor creature and say, My brother. Oh, father, there is much to be done. There are long hours, days, months of patience, labors, and prayer needed to raise such. There is enough to do, and yet how powerless we are.

DECEMBER 31, 1880.

Tonight there ends a year studded with God's mercy.

. . . Mine has been a wonderful year, and blessings have been poured upon me, until almost I cry, Why thus, O Lord God, upon thy so unprofitable servant? And then I see that it is all of grace, and not of merit of mine; only the infinite merit of my blessed Saviour. How closely are our mouths shut, and how dumb we are before such love as this. . . . And now how certain, how confident, that tomorrow, all unknown to us, is safe and blessed also, in His hands. "Praise the Lord!"

. . . And so we do, and so we will, by grace tomorrow as

W. H. FISH, PH-ENG. BOSTON

by grace today, Praise! . . . In great joy and wonder at the tender mercies of our God; a weak and almost useless servant of our King.

. . . I would that I could write *much* in little, but I am very wordy.

There is, however, only one thing "by-and-by" that we shall not have time to tell, and this is the love of God in Christ to us; all other things will be able to be told — this, never, never, never. How I wonder, sometimes, why was I (so bad) a subject of grace — free grace. Amen: I know not. . . . Not one thing faileth of all the good things that the Lord speaks. It is not in man, but all in Him.

My old friend, the Benguella fever, got me down with two days in bed and two on the edge, and today I have just been getting better; so tonight I thought I would not attempt any hard work, writing or otherwise. I sat over my Bible an extra half hour.

I would rather not say "fever," but I believe it is better just to mention it and all as it passes. One thing always is good about the fever — when the head gets better I have a real quiet time for thought, and many times very happy times with the Lord. And yet look at the miserable and little faith I have: before I could rise, I thought, Just nine or ten days from today I shall, I hope, be on the way to Bihé, and how inconvenient the next attack would be. Father, think of it! when the last time I started I was in that very same condition, and before I reached Catumbella I was, I may say, going on comfortably, and able to go. Oh, that I might have faith — faith in God.

BENGUELLA, January 19, 1881.

Oh, how can we praise God enough! I cannot, and I just wonder, and again wonder, why I was not born one of these poor, howling savages, these dark, ignorant Africans. Oh, grace! it was all infinite grace; and when I think, "What am I doing for the God of all grace, who showers upon me so much,

such overflowing, abundant blessings?" I can but answer — it seems to me nothing. There is one very glad thought: He who has begun a good work in us will perfect it to His praise and glory. We shall sing "Grace, grace," until heaven reëchoes with the sound. Oh, that you were with me to help me praise! One poor Methodist all alone cannot enjoy the shouting as we march forward to victory, as when voice answers to voice. . . . I look upon the place to which we go as the place in all Africa, and am certain that the very finger of God pointed it out, and said to the Board, "Occupy that land." . . . Let us continue in the love and grace of Jesus; let us ever be found close to Him; let us hide in the wounded side; let us watch and pray.

It was not even in sanctified human nature to be undisturbed by the delays and slow movements of African porters. He writes:

Please remember that we are in Africa and not in America; that we have to deal with those who are slow, slower, slowest. . . . One thing seems now to be certain: whatever is finally adopted, there is no question but we shall find the best way, for we are constantly enjoying the sense of our Father's hand leading us and opening our way, just as fast as He wishes us to go. Sometimes we find that *our* way would be to go faster than the Lord would have us go. . . .

Indeed, wonderful has been the leading of the Lord; and, truly, when my thought returns to it from time to time, there comes to me this confidence: If the past is thus and thus, how absolute should be our confidence for the future! And the eye will fill with joy and the heart run over with thanksgiving. *All* of grace!

In hope of leaving immediately for the first journey inland, he wrote:

BENGUELLA, January 30, 1881.

The Lord is good and gracious; He is wonderful in all the great and tender mercies with which daily He loads us. We

have indeed a record of naught else but praise and rejoicing. Oh, that we could and would praise the Lord more perfectly, and give to Him the honor due to His name! Since I wrote last there have been great changes, and we are indeed off for Bihé this week. We have much to give praise for in the way all arrangements are made for us: the way does open just step by step as we walk in it.

The hope of a speedy departure was not realized, but he was not disheartened.

FEBRUARY 20, 1881.

How much there is to rejoice and be glad for! When I look around me I am taken up; and again and again, and over and over again, I praise and adore God that I was not born as one of these people, but of Christian parentage and in a Christian land. Oh, could you but really see the need, could you but once dwell among these people, you would be willing to come to Africa to tell them of our Jesus whom we love so well. The Christian church needs to be stirred up to realize her Lord's command, "Go ye into all the world." There is so much need; there is so much that is black and dark. Oh, for power from the Holy Ghost! Only think of a nation without *any name* for God! The nearest they can give is "*Subru;*" this is "great fetish man," or perhaps "the boss fetish man." Only think what darkness this covers! There is much joy in looking forward and knowing that the Lord is now at work; that, although we are delayed week after week in this town on the coast, and have nothing left us but to have patience, yet in Bihé the Lord is working for us and for His cause; that He is preparing the way; that He is ploughing and breaking up the hard hearts. Oh, then let us sing aloud praises unto our God. He does not leave us to work alone; He does not desert us when we trust Him. His is the work; we are only His servants.

My heart sings and makes melody to the Lord, but I find it hard not to be able to sing with the voice also. . . .

## VI. ARRIVAL IN BAILUNDA.

BAILUNDA, 31st March, 1881.

There are two things to strike the eye as we enter this country — first, the ant-hills, some small, some large, some twelve or even fifteen feet in height. They are wonderful structures as the work of a weak, insignificant insect, for the white ant is a poor specimen even of an ant. The other thing that makes an impression is the *un*tropical character of the scene. For instance, yesterday in the shade the mercury only reached 80°, and this morning at 6 A. M. only 60°, so that there is no excessive heat. . . . Indeed, except now and then, discomforts are unthought of when the everlasting hills, the wonderful loveliness of grass, fern, and flower so gladden the heart that we can say only, He doeth all things well. And when, as we are sure that we are upon the Lord's own work, and are each step marching forward to plant upon the highlands of Bihé the cross of Christ crimsoned by His own precious blood, then these things and a thousand greater trials and difficulties go for nothing, dwindle into oblivion, as we shout already the war-cry and the victory, "Thanks be unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." . . .

You ask, And what about these people? How do you look upon them and they upon you? Well, let me see. They usually look upon us with much interest; indeed, wonder is the word to express the look; but when the ox came along with me upon his back, the scattering of the groups was intensely funny, and the road was always mine. There was no question asked; a hundred men would turn out of the way with their loads if I came in sight. In other places curiosity seemed to predominate with the women; and laughter, smiles, and chatter were the evidences of interest in the strangers. And how do we look upon them? They are men and women sunk in the darkest shades of superstition and sin, hidden from

the light by many years of deepest degradation, but oh! worst of all, made ten times worse by intercourse with the vice, the educated vice, of this convict settlement of Portugal. What do we think of the people? I think they need the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; that they need thousands of consecrated men and women to bring to them the good news of redemption. The same belief I have now that I had before I left America, only with this difference: it is real now, it has entered into my own experience; it has become a part not only of my convictions and belief, but it is grown into me, become mine; it is no longer hazy and far off, it has touched me; I have felt the coolness of the chill of Death's hand — "dead in trespasses and sin" — touch me, and, thank God! even now I can say with all the same feeling that often swept over me in California, Boston, England, "In this name we conquer" — Jesus — "for *He shall* save his people from their sins."

Thus I look upon these poor people. There are amongst them those who draw me to them; some whose faces are not repulsive, some who are certainly well worth a remnant of a life given them such as mine. Praise ye the Lord! Upon these beautiful mountains the name of the Lord is now honored, and shall be more and more as the days go by, and we wait the glorious appearing of our Saviour, Christ the Lord. Already this road that never, so far as I know, heard the sound of prayer — never was the place where I sit consecrated by the Word of God — knows these things. Indeed, we may well rejoice, even now, as we take up the armor and buckle on the sword; now we begin the song of victory through Him that loved us. Amen. This hope brightens the past, confidence carries us forward, and the joy of the Lord is our strength.

To me the work has become real, and also my perfect and complete nothingness, to the very being without power to raise a hand. This also has been taught me: It is not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name be the praise. *We*

*must praise;* but oh, let us then praise where the praise is due. Render unto God the things that are God's.

Ours is rather to speak of the way in which the Lord has led us than to tell how gracious He will be to us. But although we have reached Bailunda, the country adjoining Bihé, you have not. Although you have been with us in spirit, and have remembered us in your prayers, yet you have not seen the road, the camps, the days, the mornings, the afternoons, the nights. You have not toiled up some long and hot hill-side to sit down a moment and look at the grand handiwork of our God spread out before and beneath you for miles and miles. You have not when thirsty drank from the cool, clear brook; you have not seen, as we have, the caravans carrying the wax and gum and ivory to the coast.

10 April, 1881.

There is now no question in my own mind that this is a very healthy region, and very unlike what is usually considered to be the tropics. I look upon this as a temperate region, and am not the least afraid but that any one in ordinary health would enjoy good health here. They even speak of two inches of ice in Bihé; this is, I judge, unusual. Thus we are exceedingly hopeful for the healthfulness of this mission, and, with our present short experience, see no cause to the contrary.

Kwikwi, King of Bailunda, invited the missionaries to a council, where his chief men gave their views on a subject of common interest. The men spoke in indistinct, frightened tones, squatted on the ground, with their faces turned away from those to whom they were speaking:

I longed — writes Mr. Bagster — to stand up in the midst, as, God willing, I intend to some day, and as a man tell them what I had to say. As these things passed before me, a sense of weight and sadness swept over me, to think that not one of these ever heard of the Lord Jesus, not one ever heard proclaimed the free and glorious gospel of the grace of God. Oh, they would not have seen me crouch down upon the

ground to tell them the message of the King of kings, had my tongue been loosened to speak it. Often comes to me with vivid force that time at Pentecost when every man heard them speak in the tongue in the which he was born — Parthians and Medes, Elamites, and dwellers in Mesopotamia. Oh, for overcoming grace, that I may hold on and on, until, even though the tongue halt, it shall be understood. . . .

## VII. RETURN TO THE SEASHORE.

Before pushing on to Bihé it was judged expedient for Mr. Bagster to return to the coast and hasten forward the goods left there. He writes thus of the journey:

We have to rejoice in the love of Christ in our heart, although weary with the long march, hungry, thirsty, dirty. From our camp is to be seen the most beautiful view. There are mountains, there are valleys; cornfields, villages, and woods, and *all* wild. . . . Another night, another rest, another anthem of praise, and again on the march. This day the country opened upon us in a new phase. More of the grand handiwork of our God, the mountains, shut us in. Early in the day we are passing over long grassy slopes; for some hours we are slowly climbing higher and higher, until at last we overlook the third great basin or valley since leaving Bailunda. We skirt the rocky side of Mount Longo, and are, by aneroid, on this pass 5,420 feet above the sea. There are several peculiarities to note to-day: many caravans we met, saw more timber, but of a most inferior kind; a magnificent field of corn, dry and ripe, standing fifteen feet high, and, in a little field adjoining, another patch of corn eight or ten feet high, and perfectly green, the ears just showing themselves. This was on the red soil. . . . What I doubt just now is, whether there were many more beautiful spots in Eden of old than there are today in that canyon — the wild, tangled beauty, the wreaths of climbers, the mighty boulders, the baobabs, and

the many spots I may say *solid* in green, the sparkling water, and in the air the damp and dreamy sort of fairy feeling of some other life than this hard, prosaic routine, its care and strife and sin. Ah, how I enjoyed that walk, because there were plenty of boulders, and on those boulders I painted text after text, and then I cut them in and made them sure; and oh, I read them, and rejoiced and grew sad by turns. As I looked to God my heart leaped for joy. "God so loved the world" — "While we were yet sinners" — "Thou shalt be saved." And then I turned to man, and my heart sank and was sorely sad. No one that passes these rocks ever thought of such things. Oh, for power, for consecration, for whole-hearted service!

But, after all, it was more of joy to me than grief that day, for confidence welled up strong in my heart, and I was glad and rejoiced that my God and Father made all these things; and He comforted my heart with the remembrance of all His goodness. Well might Joshua say not one thing had failed of all the good things God had promised to that people Israel. It is in man, the failure; in God, the performance of all good things.

At Kassange, on the road, he wrote:

I give to the birds my own names, for I do not yet know them by their native names. There is the bell-bird, repeating a clear, bell-like note over and over again. There is the little blackbird, with a wide, black tail longer than its own body. There is another blackbird, with yellow shoulders to the wings, and another still, with red shoulders. There are grouse, crows, etc. And then the grass, fifteen feet high, and the flowers! In one spot I gathered, in a radius of ten feet, twelve varieties of flowers, and some beautiful beyond the common. And then the water over the rocks, purling and singing —

I'm for the ocean bound,
I'm going to the great, great sea —

the little cascades, the deep gulches with pure, cool streams flowing therein, or waiting a minute before pouring over some rocky barrier! . . . Here we come to new kinds of growth, new trees, and shrubs, and grasses, and the landscape becomes more tropical. There is not much to tell of the missionary's own work, the Lord's own; but these are early days, and the notions of these savages are not easily learned. They certainly have some greater and truer idea of their God than I supposed, and yet very indistinct and inadequate, utterly without love, hard and cold and uncared for.

And now, beloved friends, you who have interest to read this last page, I would say a few words, brief, but strong, if so it may be; I would exalt God with all the power of my weak, imperfect praise. I wonder and adore, I just glory in this, that He gives me grace; of His own grace is it given, grace to trust Him; grace that when all is dark and uncertain I can take the step before me, or can stand still and see His salvation. Praise ye the Lord! Now we learn from this that by His own wonderful working, which is past all our short-sightedness and imperfect judgment, He can, and He does, use the weakest things of the world to His own honor and glory. We learn that this our God does wonderful things for us, and that His own blessed presence is with us all the time. He does put the song of joy into our lips (you should read Brother Sanders's last letter to me), and this that we may praise Him. He does give us peace, and give us, in our shrinking and weakness, lessons of confidence and trust. He does all these things whereof we are glad. And, dear friends, is there not reason to be glad when we have such testimony of the love and prayer which God puts into the hearts of His people for us as comes to us month by month, and more than ever this month? "Oh, that men would therefore praise the Lord for His goodness." "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. . . . Who crowneth us with loving-kindness and tender mercies." Amen. "He leadeth

me beside the still waters; He restoreth my soul; He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake."

All hail the power of Jesus' name!

Yours in the service — the best of all service — yours by the grace of God, a missionary to Bihé, Africa.

WALTER W. BAGSTER.

MAY 4. Most surely have we seen our Father's hand; and now, as I look back on these days, I rejoice that we have not been left alone, but the promise which our Lord gave to help and strengthen his disciples has been fulfilled to us. By His own hand have we been led and by His own presence cheered. And because I do not, when I come to such places as, perhaps, the mountain that we passed upon the way, and that sent coursing and thrilling through and through me the shout of confidence — because I go on to other things, and do not write down all that the Lord taught me while I journeyed by that mountain, the songs of praise that He put into my mouth, the gladness that came into my soul because in this Lord Jehovah, this Rock of Ages, we were trusting, the One who planted that mountain and polished the face of granite, age after age, with the storm, the sunshine, and the shower, and no man says nay, no man hinders — (what glorious safety for me, what certainty of success in the work: Not, therefore, not unto us, but unto thy name be the praise!) — because I do not, as my heart, hand, and pen would willingly do, write these things, do not think that in Africa the Lord is not. Do not think that I have not joy in the redemption which my Saviour purchased for me. Do not think that my heart does not yearn oftentimes after these poor black brothers of mine. Do not think that I am cold; that this journey, the way, the forests, the flowers, the birds, streams, and mountains are all; that, because I have interest to read and record the elevation as shown by the aneroid and the thermometer, the

greater things are forgotten or pushed aside. No! one thing I do.

And here I would ask you, as you so lovingly remember us all before God, to mention this matter before Him whose ear is ever open to the wants of the weakest of His children. Ask for great peace, very great patience, humbleness of heart, and yet a very valiant holding up the Christ and Him crucified; and then forget not the promise: "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

Mail-day, and time to close, but just an idea that has been in mind. Bihé is the place that I left California to go to. I have journeyed many, many, many miles and days, sometimes with the speed of an express-train, and then, a rest; again, the surge of the waves and the roar of the wind before another quiet place came in Old England, where the cup was filled to overflowing; onward once more (still for Bihé), and day by day new tokens of love and mercy followed, and fresh and re-fresh evidence of tender care, and then a long waiting for teaching and strength. Benguella kept us for months, until once more the Lord said: "Go forward," and we came almost to the border of Canaan. Had we climbed the mountain, as Moses climbed, we could have overlooked the land, as he did. But no, it was and is: "Tarry yet a while until the set time is come;" and longingly we look towards Bihé, and very, very eagerly do we watch and pray, and with many, many steps and days' march between us and that land, yet with joy we go forward, knowing each night will bring rest and refreshment on the road. The mountains are steep, the path is rocky, the way narrow, and the rivers "to swim in," but "as thy day, so thy strength."

To me this came as a sweet illustration of the Christian life, and the longing for Bihé as the longing (only far greater) for the New Canaan, the New Jerusalem, the City of our God. There we who love the Lord shall come — in the "set time to favour" — us that the Saviour knows.

KASSANGE, July 3, 1881.

The world is large, the whole starry sky above me is larger, yet the heaven of heavens cannot contain all His praise. Most glorious and precious is His name, and most rejoicing in Him is His poor servant here. My heart sings with you, as you are at the first service of the day: "Praise, oh, help me praise!" I am, by the grace of God, kept. I just go on today. I try to use all the power God has given, both physical and mental. I am not carrying the burden, and I do not intend to carry it. I am not told to do so. The Captain's instructions are (thanks be unto God!): "Casting all your care on Him." Rejoice, O my soul, rejoice! I see and know a thousand difficulties, but above all is God, and with joy and gladness of heart do I lift up my head and praise Him, and not a weight remains, not a care, not a sore spot. All is the work of and for and by Jesus Christ. At the foot of the cross there is a mighty power found. Poor, weak men are borne upon the wings of everlasting love far above all earth's cares. I find all that I can do, and more. I just go on rejoicing, doing what I can, and leaving the rest. Abiding in Christ, all is well. We work all the same, but with increased strength, as we have no burden to carry.

In regard to the things he had to give up for missionary work, Mr. Bagster wrote in July, 1881:

I had to leave preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. You know not what this means. Do not mistake — it is far harder than you have any idea of; it is a deeper, wider ocean to cross than you know. But oh, the blessed sweetness of all! "The love of Christ constraineth us," and the joy goes deeper than the grief; it swallows it up. Then there are wonderful and rich and glad experiences of Jesus' presence and keeping that infinitely more than pay for all. More than that: there is the longed-for "Well done!" waiting for us in the brightness of a Saviour's smile above. When I think of these things, the great,

deep, sad partings, the many things left, just fade away to be little things; they are gladly given up for Jesus. Praise ye the Lord!

## VIII. RETURN TO THE COAST A SECOND TIME.

There was little rest for Mr. Bagster in those days. When the first reënforcements reached Benguella, Mr. Bagster came down to welcome them, and escort them in. In a letter dated Benguella, August 28, 1881, he writes:

I do wish that I could sing! Hold on, wait, and when the Lord comes my dull tongue will be loosened, and I shall shout: "Praise the Lord, who has bought us with His own precious blood" . . .

I have not seen four days' rain since I was in America. The thermometer now reaches 90°, but it is not a bit worse than, if as bad as, in Boston, when I was there. Thank God! I am well. This land of Bailunda, and the rough work and travel and food, seem to suit me. Not one bit am I discouraged — not one bit. I am full of hope, of earnest desire, of determination in the name of the Lord to go forward. To say, however, that I may not sometimes write with a sober and even sad heart, I cannot, when speaking of this people and place. They are sad, and I cannot but realize it. Praise? Yes, we will praise, and we will give thanks. We are not of those who need to go with downcast faces. We are sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty. Amen, amen.

There are many who do not make the promises their own and just live them, and I amongst these fail to keep on shouting the joy of victory and the praises of our Leader; and yet, whenever my heart remembers my King, then the King's name is sweet to me, and the King's hand, touching his servant, puts new power into him for praise and gladness of heart. I will sing and give thanks. . . . When you think of me,

remember that I am just a living illustration of the infinite love of Christ, and a glad witness to the grand truth that Christ is a perfect Saviour, and that He never leaves, never forgets the least of His own. . . .

Work in the mission-field takes such a strong hold of missionaries that they long to continue it, and are unhappy away from it. "Oh, their great need!" You cannot imagine it — it can't be told; and it draws you to this people until even when you put your hand on their dark shoulders your heart yearns for them, and you could not leave them unless you must.

## IX. THE THIRD JOURNEY INLAND.

Just before leaving Benguella for the third, which proved his last journey, he wrote, November 7, 1881:

I enjoyed our morning service much. I spoke on Psalm xxiv: 1 — "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." There remains, however, one lack, and this is the power of telling those who know not of the love of Jesus Christ to sinners lost and undone. We can indeed speak one to another, but oh, how I long to be able to tell of Jesus and His love, of the cross, the rising of the Son of God. Oh, for a tongue able to speak this language, to be able to preach in word and in deed also. Praise the Lord! Amen. We are all reasonably well for Benguella; only one sick day in all the month for me.

Let us joy and rejoice in the God of our salvation, even in the great changes that come to us, and are truly, and quite rightly, perhaps, great trials. But then the sweetness that you speak of, the something we as Christians enjoy, remains. "None of these things move me," said the apostle; but they were great trials all the same. This week, God willing, I start for Bihé. I now think that this is my place, that God sent me

here; and hope, so long as He wills it, to work on joyfully, hopefully, and ever looking to the appearing of Jesus our Saviour.

NOVEMBER 12, 1881.

We have started. All are at last upon the road to Catumbella. Our Lord Jesus is wonderfully good to us. We are all more than glad. . . . I have on my mind a subject on which I want to write at some time. It is "The Missionary's Joys." Perhaps the only missionary I ever heard or read of who gives any idea of the joy of missionary enterprise is Dr. Livingstone; and I shall attempt to explain how the real love that impels the missionary to leave country and home for foreign work — how that little seed becomes a great tree, and all the longings of his heart gather daily new strength and joy by the love that goes out more and more abundantly toward this people. . . . We stop in the town of Catumbella tomorrow, Lord's Day, and Monday we go out into the hills. Now, dear brother, and all whom this word may reach, just praise God with us and magnify His holy name, for His love is wonderful. He knows we are little ones and He treats us as such, so gracious is He. Praise the Lord! Amen.

KIBUNDA, November 22, 1881.

We are all so far on our way, all full of perseverance and hope. . . . "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate." Is not this just the way we need to do if we are to be of real use in this world? And, having seen how many real commonplace folks there are even in our America, how can we be surprised if we find now and then a rather ordinary specimen of a native?

There does not seem much to say of our journey. It is hard work and very unsatisfactory, this traveling with so many folks; but great troubles we have not seen.

BAILUNDA, December 1, 1881

One thing is sure, the Lord has kept and led and blessed

us. We all five reached here the evening of November 29. Not *one* good thing hath failed of all the good things that the Lord promised.

The last letter one friend in America received from him was dated Bailunda, January 8, 1882:

Fly over and see this land and people, and you would remain here. You could not leave them; they would win your heart by their needs, and then there would come so much to be done and so much to hope for, you could not even so much as make a move or flutter one wing toward your return flight to America. No, you would most certainly remain in Africa.

I think, the next house I build, of building one with the floor some two or three feet above the ground, thus allowing for a good circulation of air beneath the floor. But I am not dead yet, and I hope, by God's blessing, to be a long time here to work for Jesus' kingdom. . . . Mrs. Walter came to Benguella well; the next month came Mrs. Nichols well. The very next month came the journey to Bailunda, and I am smiled at when I ask what to write to Mrs. Stover and Miss Mawhir. . . . Today Brother Sanders's subject, "Our citizenship is in heaven," was a grand one to lift from this earth to the heaven where we shall dwell. By the grace of God we will meet before the throne of God. "He that heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life." Notice the great positiveness of the word. There is for you and for me laid up a crown of praise and beauty. Oh, let us then go on the way to Zion, shouting as we go, "Victory, victory, through the blood of the Lamb." Below, hope; above, fullness of joy. . . . I have not been giving you all the praise and joy that really do reign in my heart. Just now I read the 119th Psalm to myself and Brother Sanders, and intensely enjoyed it.

The only ambition I have left in me is, by God's grace, to serve my Saviour, Jesus Christ the Lord, truly, worthily, in my life; and when my change comes, then my ambition is to see Jesus, to live with Him, and to cast at His feet the crown He gives, very, very bright with stars won for Him and for His glory.

Clearly, you do not yet love the Board as I love it, and may be I can give you some idea of how they regard their missionaries. They are peculiarly generous in their treatment of those who go out under their care; they regard the missionary as one of themselves, only that to him is entrusted the work at the front, while they are the channel through which God's people fulfill their Lord's command, "Go ye into all the world." . . .

This Board, under which I work, is guided by the very hand of God, manifestly so; and, at the same time, by the most careful and prayerful consideration of every step. When they consider a thing right and best, I could only bow in submission to their decision, for in it I must see our Father's hand.

CHILUME, BAILUNDA, 22 January, 1882.

It is not what we really do, so much as what our hearts enlarge to and grasp of our Christ's kingdom, that we are really to give account of, and for which our King will reward His servant. It is grace, wholly grace. A child in California, a Sunday-school scholar, was dying; his mother sat by him. "Mother," said he, "I want to pray for father." He did so, and almost immediately he said, "Mother, I must pray for my Sunday school." Having done so, he was silent for a moment, and then, turning his face to his mother, he whispered, "Mother, if I may pray for my Sunday school, why may I not pray for the whole world?" And he passed away with his prayer for the whole world almost upon his lips. Was this child in his simple faith limited? No. So with us. We may be very closely shut in; but, praise be unto Him! we are shut in with the Omnipotent God — we are unlimited in Him.

May we not then most reasonably, even when everything goes slowly, when everything does seem to be at a standstill, — oh, may we not then take hold on God with new and stronger importunity, and cry mightily to Him?

Here in Africa we do have blessings great, sweet, holy; blessings from a God of all love. We have rejoiced, we do rejoice, yea, and we will rejoice; but the needs are great — our needs are great. This is a costly work, this is a vast undertaking. But we have counted the cost; we have sat down and cast up the expenses, and drawn out a balance, and we find our Banker able to supply all our needs. We prove our Captain, a captain who is always victorious; we rest upon the Eternal, and feel beneath our tread onward, upward, the Rock of Ages. Greater is He that is for us than he that is against us.

Brother McColl's short time for the work in Africa speaks to me very, very plainly, for his position and mine are very similar.

Mr. Bagster had frequently spoken of the strange providence by which the heroic pioneer missionary McColl had been so soon withdrawn from Africa. Two days after the letter just quoted he wrote:

When the man named Christian in *Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress* entered the wicket gate, he saw before him some miles at least of the narrow way, and far off he saw the cross upon the hill. As for me, I may illustrate by saying that in the missionary life I also stand in the wicket gate. I have, by the blessing of God, reached the place where I do not altogether have to depend on others' words, but can see for myself; can lift up my eyes and behold the land. The land is before me as Canaan was before the feet of Moses when he went up to the top of Mount Nebo. The children of Israel had not possessed the land; they had yet to go up. We have not yet possessed the land, but we are upon the borders, with our Great Captain's presence in the midst of us. We hear His

voice of cheer: "Go forward;" "One man of you shall chase a thousand';", "The Lord your God, He hath promised you the good land which He hath given to you."

This last page of his journal sent to America, not quite a month before his death, is signed:

Yours in the most joyous service of our King,

W. W. BAGSTER.

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Mr. Bagster from the first had suffered more from fever than either of his associates. He passed a careful medical examination before leaving this country, but it is evident, from what has been learned since, that he had peculiar predispositions to this African fever. The great safeguard against it and remedy for it, quinine, occasioned such disordered action in his heart and head that he was convinced that for him the medicine was worse than the disease, and he could not take it. On reaching the coast, while Mr. Sanders and Mr. Miller suffered so slightly that they doubted if it was the malaria, Mr. Bagster early experienced excruciating pains in his head. Relief came shortly, but there was too frequent recurrence of fever, till he reached the highlands of Bailunda. There he felt so well that he was confident he was to have no more trouble. He positively declared it to be a healthy region, and some of his associates have used even stronger language as to its healthfulness than he did. If he could have kept quiet there, it might have proved so. It seemed necessary for him to go to the coast if any one went, and he was constantly exposed to the malaria there. When he first went down to look after the cloths and stores which the porters failed to bring, he was delayed a long time. The delay was prolonged again when he returned a second time to welcome the first reënforcement. On the road

up he received an injury to his foot which threatened to be very serious. With his strength so much drawn upon, he needed more favorable conditions for recuperation than could be had in their extemporized huts, which did not afford the protection the native thatchers had promised against the drenching floods, when the rainy season came. The rebound to health and elasticity which he had experienced previously in reaching the highlands failed him this time.

The particulars of his death and some characterization of his life were given in the *Missionary Herald* for June, 1882. A combination of qualities not often found in the same man fitted him remarkably for the work he was doing. It seemed as though he had been raised up for this African mission. Above and through and underneath all other qualifications was his abounding faith and joy in the Lord, and sacrificial consecration to service, and, if need be, to suffering. While it looks as though much greater things were to be done by him, we do not fail to recognize how much he had already accomplished. Perhaps his associates, and others who shall be drawn into the mission by the quickening inspiration of his life, are to be used by God to do things for which he was not fitted or needed.

One of his companions wrote: "I cannot sorrow for him. He is far better off. He sees his Lord face to face. He longed much to preach the gospel to these people, hence he disliked the journeying and other things that kept him from applying himself to the language. No duty that presented itself, however disagreeable, was shirked. But it was not given him to preach by word to these people. News of Mr. McColl's death, received one or two months ago, warned him, as he said, to be ready, too. Holding about the same position, the news seemed to be a special message to him. He spoke of it more than once before his sickness. . . . To the Mission his death is a very severe blow. He carried many of its burdens. By knowledge of men and things, and by familiarity with business methods, he could do well what we shall find it hard to do.

His Christian life and devoted energy were an example and stimulus for us all. . . .

"As I was looking at Brother Bagster's face just after he passed away, and thought of him as in his Saviour's presence, in the fullness of joy, I envied him. He would no longer, on the one hand, have these people trying constantly to extort from us, and, on the other hand, feel that those at home may justly think expenses are heavy, while this and that constantly hinder the study of the language and the rapid pushing on of the work. He would no longer be perplexed with the difficulties of traveling and of making new settlements. I say, I envied him for a moment, though for a moment only. Then I was ashamed of the cowardice and laziness that wanted the crown without the cross, the reward without the service. I trust I may be spared forty years, if such be God's will, and that time be filled up with hard labor for His cause."

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